

Protective Factors at work

Preventing child abuse and neglect in Nebraska.



nebraskachildren
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION




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**Prevention
begins with
promoting
positive
parenting.**



April is National Child Abuse Awareness Month. And the good news is that most people are already aware that child abuse is a problem. But when you'll ask people about child abuse and neglect, you'll usually get one of two responses.

Outrage or eye-rolling. Sometimes both.

You'll hear the outrage people feel toward the extreme, notable and well publicized cases of physical abuse that they hear about in the media. How those parents are monsters and there's no prison dark enough for the likes of them. Then you'll see the eye-rolling when people discuss how "child abuse" is an overused term that now applies to any kind of discipline.

So if the true abusers are evil, abnormal beasts, is it possible to prevent abuse and neglect?

Prevention lives between outrage and eye-rolling.

The truth is that most child abuse and neglect cases are not extreme or violent enough to get on the news. Abuse and neglect comes from a pattern of parenting behaviors that ignores the child's basic needs or inflicts intentional injury upon the child.

But there's good news there. If abuse and neglect is a pattern of behaviors, we can stop those patterns from forming. In short, Nebraska's communities CAN prevent child abuse before it starts. But only if we let go of the idea that all child abuse is committed by monsters and embrace the idea that we all play a role in protecting our communities' children.

Promoting positive parenting through Protective Factors.

The Protective Factors, which we'll go into more detail on in a later section, are part of a proven framework for supporting and encouraging healthy parenting practices. The Protective Factors work—and everyone in Nebraska can help build them into their communities, to make sure families have what they need to develop positive patterns and thrive in the long term.





The Data

**The state of maltreatment
in Nebraska.**

Abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect in Nebraska doesn't just affect the child. The long-term effects follow a child into adulthood, leading to long-term health problems, emotional issues and increased risks for drug use and other high-risk behaviors.



Every day in Nebraska,
over 12 children
experience some form
of maltreatment.

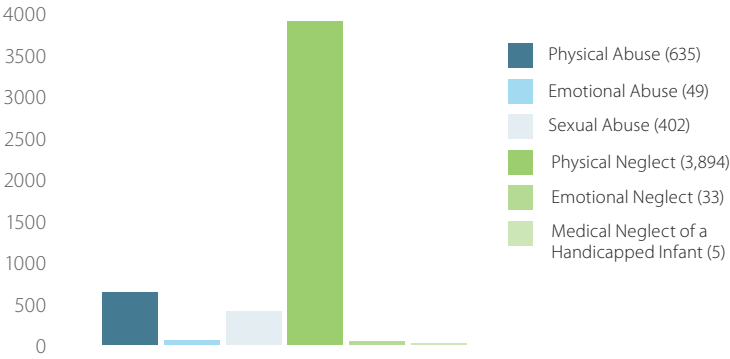
2,892
substantiated cases
of maltreatment
were logged in 2013.

32,037 reports
of maltreatment
were made to the
Child Abuse and
Neglect Hotline in 2013.

4,657 kids
experienced
maltreatment in 2013
an increase from 4,306 in 2012.



Types of substantiated maltreatment (2013)

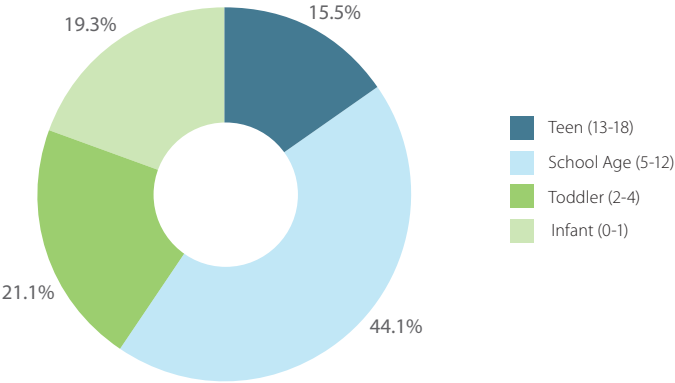


Some children experienced more than 1 type of maltreatment. The numbers here will be higher than the total number of children who experienced maltreatment.

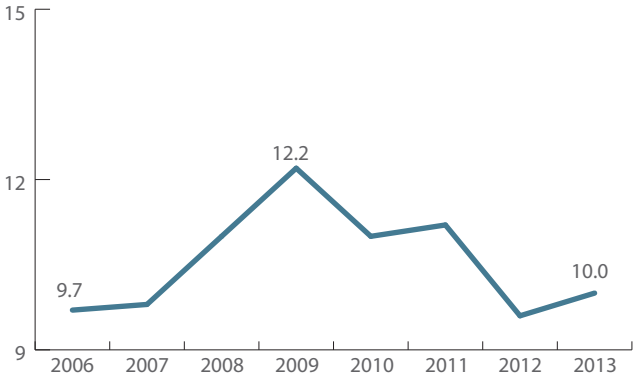
It is important to note that these numbers only include maltreatment cases that were reported. The actual incidence of maltreatment may be higher than what is reported here.

Source: Voices for Children “Kids Count in Nebraska Report” based on data from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Child maltreatment by age (2013)



Number of child maltreatment victims per 1,000 children (2006-2013)



Rate was created by using the total number of children 0-17 years. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates, Table CP05.

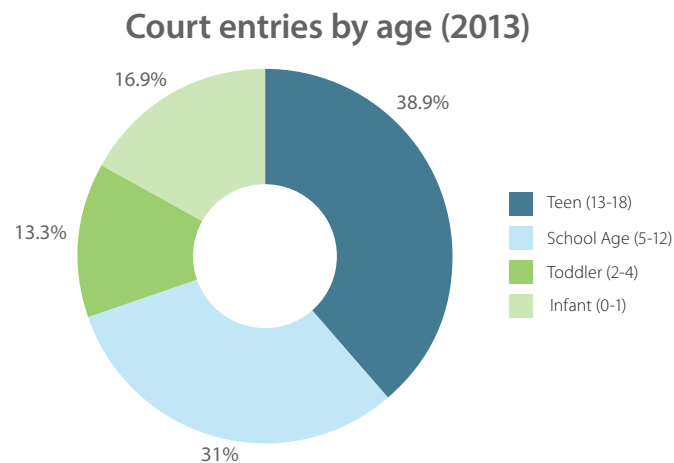


Into the system...

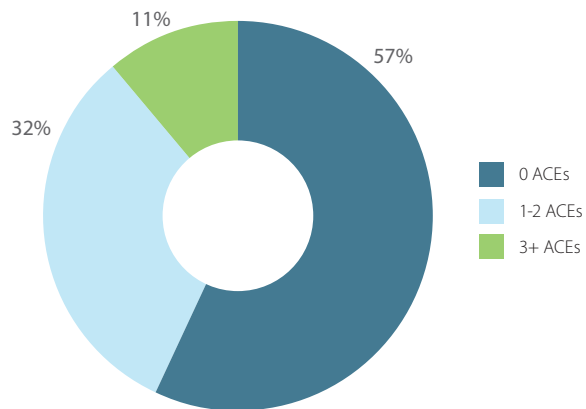
When a child is removed from the home because of abuse and enters the child welfare system, that child is set on a path toward negative outcomes that is costly to the community and to the state.

6,584 kids
entered the child
welfare system in 2013.

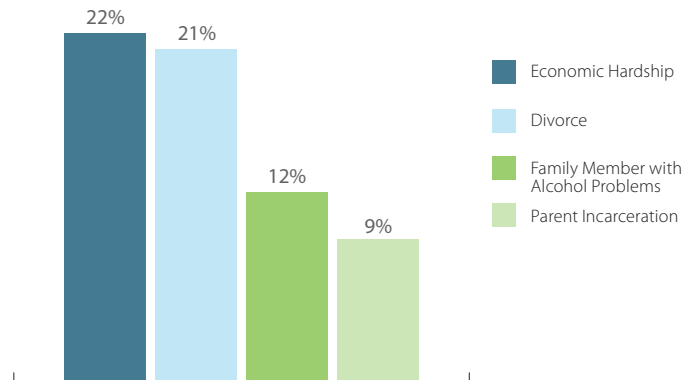
12,034 kids
were involved in the child
welfare system in 2013.



Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (2011-2012)¹



Most common Adverse Childhood Experiences (2011-12)¹



1. Child Trends, Adverse Childhood Experiences, National and State Level Prevalence, 2014.

Source: Voices for Children “Kids Count in Nebraska Report” based on data from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Common ACEs in Nebraska also include verbal abuse and household mental illness.
Source: Nebraska DHHS, Office of Epidemiology, 2012.



What does it **all** mean?

One of the things you may have noticed when reviewing the data is that the vast majority of substantiated maltreatment claims are for physical neglect. Some of the ways that physical neglect are described by Nebraska state law is as an action that causes a child to be “deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter or care” or “placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health.”

Homelessness and transiency. The loss of utilities in the home. Mental illness of parents. Food insecurity. All of these things may be examples of physical neglect. And for many cases like these, a proactive response of wrapping the family in services to bolster their Protective Factors, may be an appropriate course of action.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation has been working with communities across the state to develop community-owned Prevention Systems. These systems empower community service providers to proactively work with families at risk to help make sure they're buffered with the Protective Factors that all families need.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is testing “alternative response” strategies that focus more on strengthening family situations instead of unnecessarily removing a child from the home.

These are positive strides toward a Nebraska where every family has what it needs to raise strong, stable children.





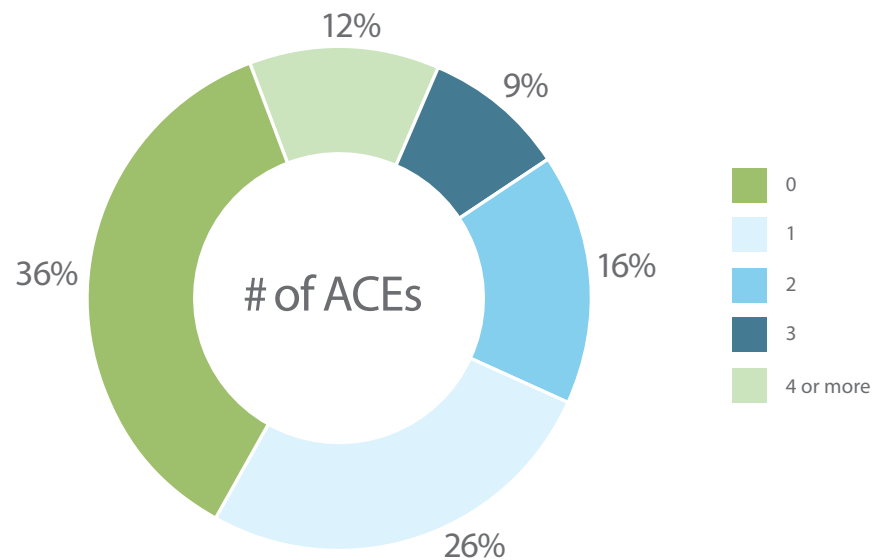
The Specifics

**What exactly are we
trying to prevent?
Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACEs)**

What is an **Adverse Childhood Experience?**

An ACE is an instance of abuse, neglect, violence, poverty or any other trauma that occurs in the life of someone under the age of 18. The Kaiser ACE study looked at 17,000 children to examine the prevalence of ACE exposure nationally.

How Common are ACEs?



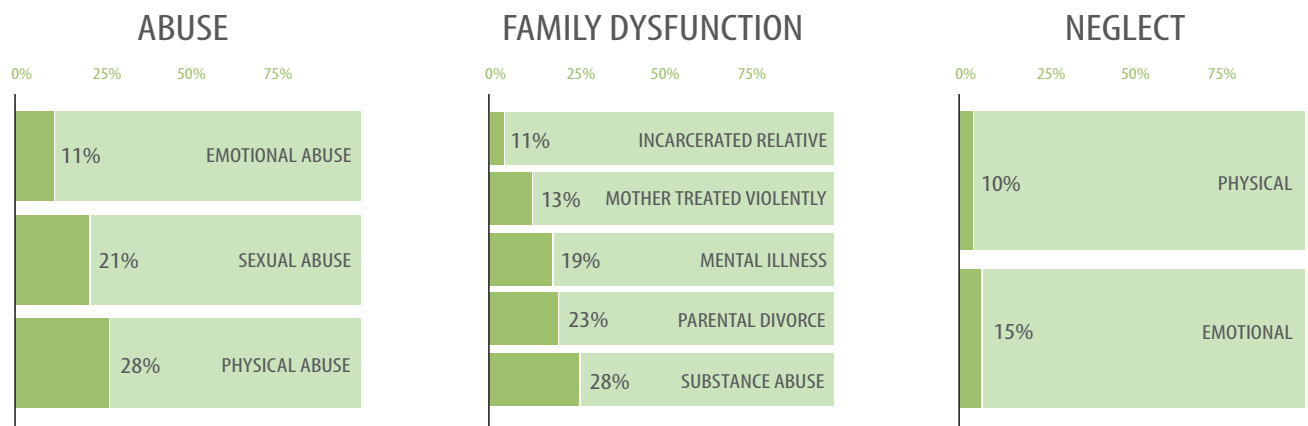
Almost two-thirds of adults surveyed reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience – and the majority of respondents who reported at least one ACE reported more than one.





Type of ACEs

The ACE study looked at three categories of adverse experience: **childhood abuse**, which included emotional, physical and sexual abuse; **neglect**, including both physical and emotional neglect; and **family dysfunction**, which included growing up in a household where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of a mother or stepmother, parental separation/divorce, or a member of the household in prison. Respondents were given an **ACE score** between 0 and 10 based on how many of these 10 types of adverse experience they reported being exposed to.



This graphic, adapted from the Center for Disease Control's Veto Violence website, shows that 64% of children in the study suffered an Adverse Childhood Experience. Physical abuse and substance abuse were among the most common. 12% of the youth in the study had experienced 4 or more ACEs. Each exposure to an adverse childhood experience compounds the risk of future problems.

Children who are affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences face a higher likelihood of problems, both as children and when they become adults.

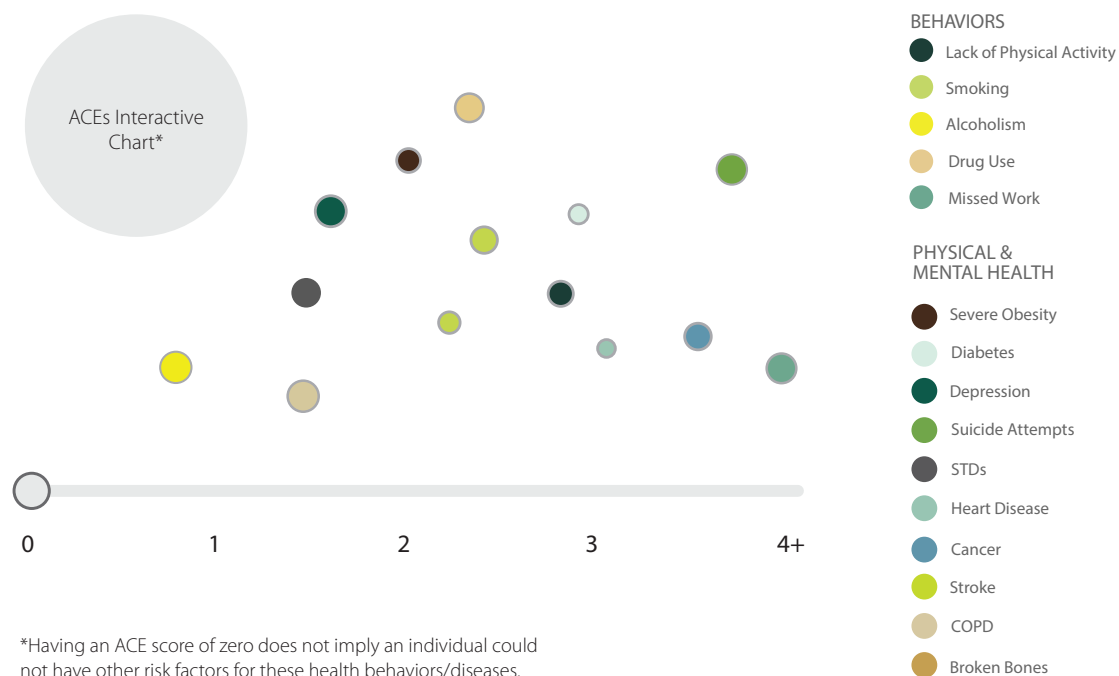
The effects don't stop there.

The high-risk behaviors and mental illness caused by multiple ACEs can dramatically impact all of us. Higher crime rates. Greater dependence on public assistance. Declining workforce readiness. These larger societal patterns begin with individuals. Reducing the number of individuals with ACEs may be the key to reversing these trends.

How do ACEs affect our lives?

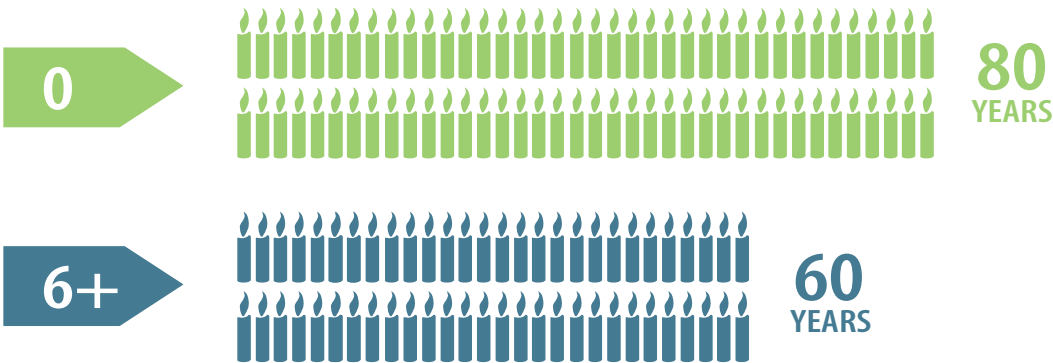
ACEs can have lasting effects on behavior and health...

Simply put, our childhood experiences have a tremendous, lifelong impact on our health and the quality of our lives. The ACE Study showed dramatic links between adverse childhood experiences and risky behavior, psychological issues, serious illness and **the leading causes of death**.

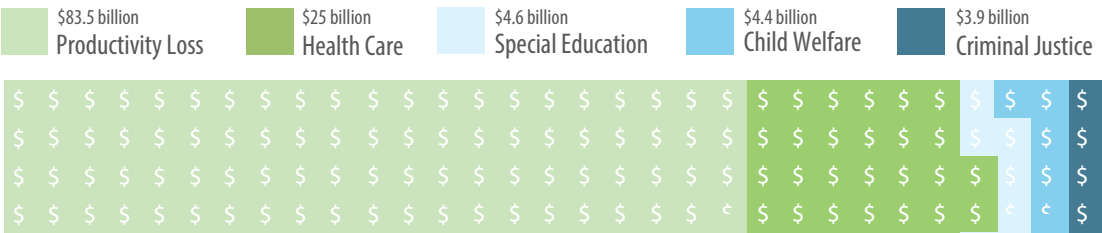


How do ACEs affect our society?

People with six or more ACEs died nearly **20 years earlier on average** than those without ACEs.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the lifetime costs associated with child maltreatment at \$124 billion.



How does Nebraska stack up on ACEs?

Thanks to information from the 2012 ACE study by the Office of Epidemiology at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, we now have the answers.

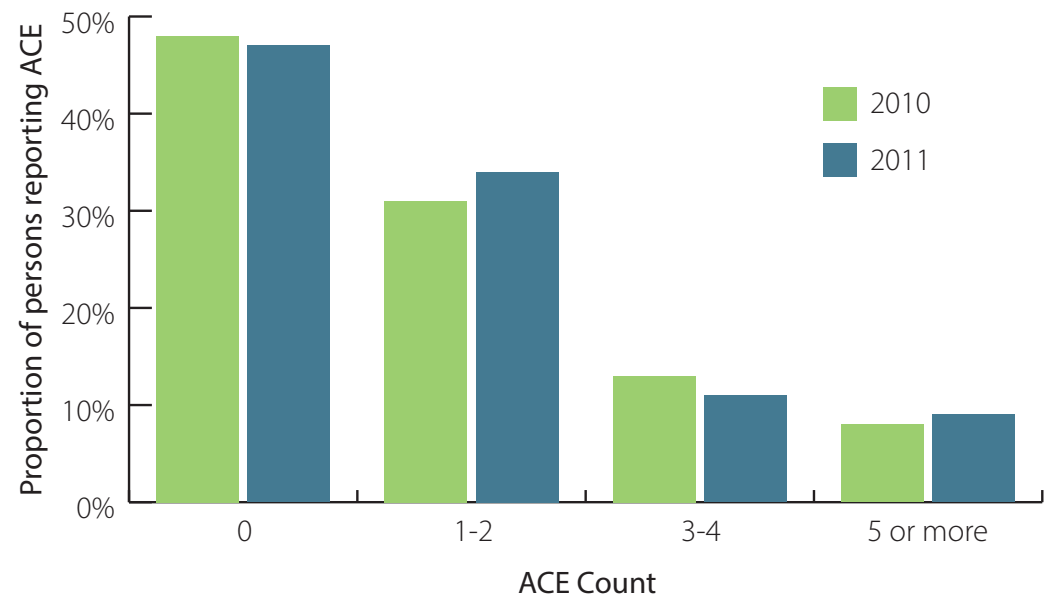
More of Nebraska's kids experienced ZERO ACEs in 2010-2011.

That's good news. Nationally, about 36% of children have exposure to zero ACEs, so on the whole our children have been better protected with nearly 47% being ACE-free.

However, a look at the chart tells you that in 2010 and 2011, about 22% of Nebraska's children experienced 3 or more ACEs. The national average here is about 21%. So while fewer of our children are experiencing ACEs at all, the ones who do are as likely to have multiple exposures as children nationally.

What's that mean? It means that Nebraskans need to do a better job protecting the kids at greatest risk. And they are, of course, the hardest to reach.

Prevalence of ACE count in 2010-2011



Nebraska children are less likely to suffer from physical or sexual abuse.

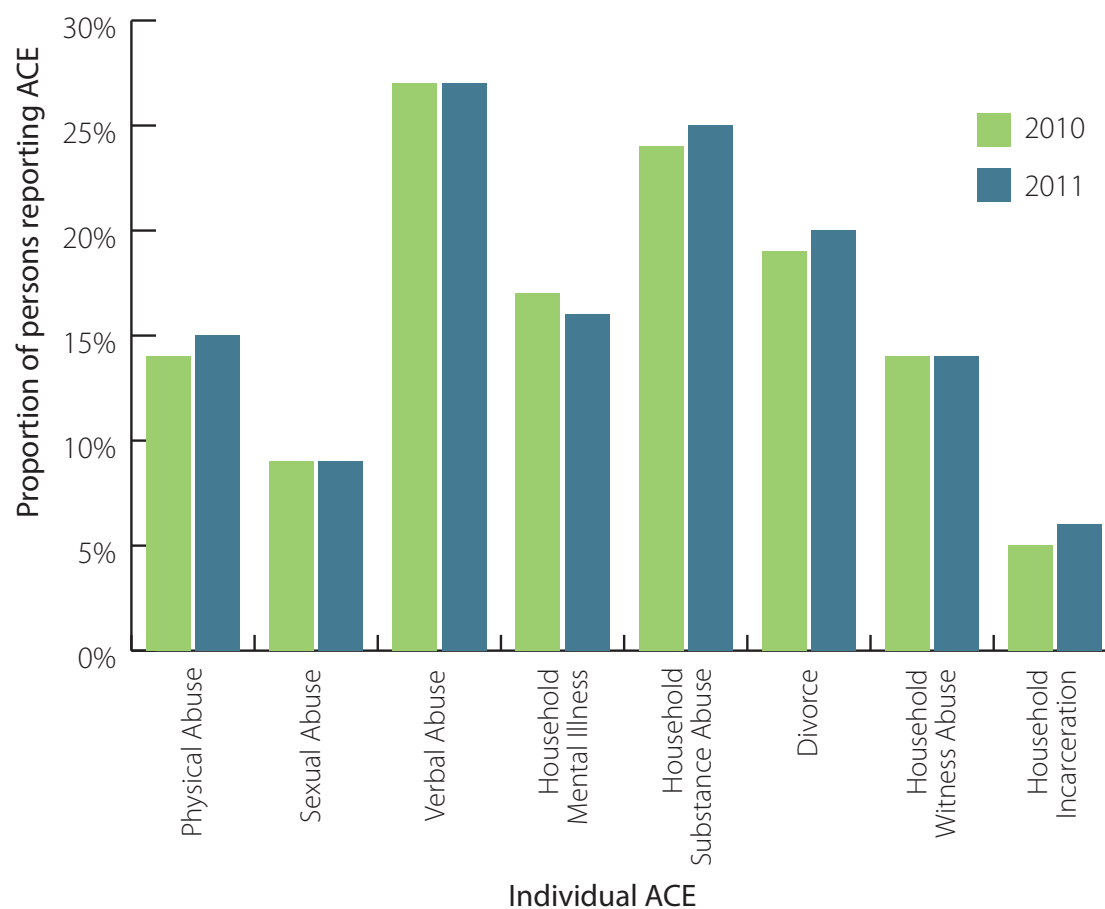
While 15% of ACEs reported in Nebraska in 2011 were physical abuse, the national stat was 28%. About 8% of Nebraska ACE victims report sexual abuse, compared to 21% nationally. While zero incidents is the only acceptable number for physical and sexual abuse, it's clear that Nebraska is protecting its children more effectively than other states.

Nebraska children are more likely to suffer verbal/emotional abuse.

Nationally, only 11% of ACE victims cite this offense. In Nebraska, it's 23%. These numbers make it clear that positive parental interaction education programs that have proven effective need to expand their reach to create more nurturing environments for children.

Nebraska has slightly fewer ACEs related to household mental illness, substance abuse and divorce. We have far fewer household incarcerations (6% here compared to 11% nationally) but more children witnessing abuse in their households (15% here compared to 13% nationally).

Prevalence of Individual ACEs by year





The Solution

**The Protective Factors:
Buffers that help
families thrive.**

What are Protective Factors?

We've all heard of risk factors that contribute to problems within families. Protective Factors are the positive counterpoint to risk factors. Protective Factors help families stay safe, healthy and strong.

According to research, when multiple risk factors are present in a family, there's a greater likelihood of negative outcomes, including delayed development and child maltreatment. But when multiple Protective Factors enter the picture, we see a greater probability of positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

Protective Factors are critical for all children, youth, families and communities. They are the difference between families and communities that not only survive, but thrive. Each of us has a role to play to help strengthen Protective Factors in our community and the families around us.

NebraskaPinwheels.org is dedicated to helping visitors discover basic characteristics and resources all families need to thrive and what you can do to develop as a parent, caregiver, teacher, service provider or other community member.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #1: NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

Research shows that babies who received affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens and adults who are happy, healthy and have relational, self-regulation and problem-solving skills. Research also shows that a consistent relationship with caring adults in the early years of life is associated with better grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions and increased ability to cope with stress later in life.

As children grow, nurturing by parents and other caregivers remains important for healthy physical and emotional development. Parents nurture their older children by making time to listen to them, being involved and

interested in the child's school and other activities, staying aware of the child or teen's interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for the child when necessary.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #2: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Parents who understand the usual course of child development are more likely to be able to provide their children with respectful communication, consistent rules and expectations, developmentally appropriate limits and opportunities that promote independence. But no parent can be an expert on all aspects of infant, child and teenage development or on the most effective ways to support a child at each stage. When parents are not aware of normal developmental milestones, interpret their child's behaviors in a negative way or do not know how to respond to and effectively manage a child's behavior, they can become frustrated and may resort to harsh discipline.

As children grow, parents need to continue to foster their parenting competencies by learning about and responding to children's emerging needs. Information about child development and parenting may come from many sources, including extended families, cultural practices, media, formal parent education classes or a positive school environment that supports parents. Interacting with other children of similar ages also helps parents better understand their own child. Observing other caregivers who use positive techniques for managing children's behavior provides an opportunity for parents to learn healthy alternatives.

Parenting styles need to be adjusted for each child's unique temperament and circumstances. Parents of children with special needs may benefit from additional coaching and support to reduce frustration and help them become the parents their children need.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #3: PARENTAL RESILIENCE

Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience—the flexibility and inner strength to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children. This can help children learn critical self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, physical and mental health problems, marital conflict, substance abuse and domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, financial insecurity and homelessness—can reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children. Conversely, community-level protective factors—such as a positive community environment and economic opportunities—enhance parental resilience.

All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supportive caring relationships or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed. All of these qualities strengthen their capacity to parent effectively, and they can be nurtured and developed through skill-building activities or through supportive interactions with others.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #4: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Parents with a network of emotionally supportive friends, family and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice or concrete support such as transportation or occasional child care. In other words, a positive community environment—and the parent's ability to participate effectively in his or her community—is an important protective factor. On the other hand, research has shown that parents who are isolated and have few social connections are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Social connections support children in multiple ways. A parent's positive relationships give children access to other caring adults, a relationship-level protective factor that may include extended family members, mentors or other members of the family's community. Parents' social interactions also model important relational skills for children and increase the likelihood that children will benefit from involvement in positive activities (individual-level factors). As children grow older, positive friendships and support from peers provide another important source of social connection.

Being new to a community, recently divorced or a first-time parent makes a support network even more important. It may require extra effort for these families to build the new relationships they need. Some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills to expand their social networks. In the meantime, social connections can come from other caring adults such as service providers, teachers or advocates. Helping parents identify resources and/or providing opportunities for them to make connections within their neighborhoods or communities may encourage isolated parents to reach out. Often, opportunities exist within faith-based organizations, schools, hospitals, community centers and other places where support groups or social groups meet.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #5: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

Families whose basic needs (food, clothing, housing and transportation) are met have more time and energy to devote to their children's safety and well-being. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, lack health insurance or face a family crisis (such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent), their ability to support their children's healthy development may be at risk. Families whose economic opportunities are limited may need assistance connecting to social service supports such as housing, alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling or public benefits.

Partnering with parents to identify and access resources may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports also may help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #6: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

Children's emerging ability to form bonds and interact positively with others, self-regulate their emotions and behavior, communicate their feelings, and solve problems effectively has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults and peers. Parents and caregivers grow more responsive to children's needs—and less likely to feel stressed or frustrated—as children learn to tell parents what they need and how parental actions make them feel, rather than “acting out” difficult feelings.

On the other hand, children's challenging behaviors or delays in social-emotional development create extra stress for families. Parenting is more challenging when children do not or cannot respond positively to their parents' nurturing and affection. These children may be at greater risk for abuse. Identifying and working with children early to keep their development on track helps keep them safe and helps their parents facilitate their healthy development.





The Action

**How you can put
the Protective Factors
to work in your
community.**

It's a fact: parenting is the hardest job in the world. It's also the most important. The good news is that parents are not alone. Raising children is not something anyone can do in a vacuum. It takes a nurturing community committed to strengthening families to ensure parents have what they need to succeed at life's greatest challenge.

Are you doing your part? Whether you're an employer, educator, neighbor or friend, you have a role to play in helping your hometown raise strong, stable kids.



For Parents

Saying that parenting is a tough job is an understatement. After all, “jobs” are supposed to end when you clock out. And you know perfectly well that being a parent is a round-the-clock proposition, where even the best parents make mistakes and are sometimes unsure that they’re doing the right thing.

The truth is raising people to be the best that they can be should be hard work. It’s the most important job to be done in Nebraska communities, and as a parent, you’re in the thick of it. There’s plenty that your community can do to support you to be the parent you want to be. Better still, there’s plenty that you can do to support yourself.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective Factors are attributes in people and families that increase health and well-being. All families have Protective Factors.

You’ve probably heard of “risk factors.” Protective Factors act as a buffer against risk factors and are even more important in the probability of positive outcomes.

If you look at any strong, healthy family, you will see the Protective Factors. When things are going well we are building the Protective Factors without thinking about it. But like many worthwhile things in life, living all of the Protective Factors takes practice. Basically, this means discovering the best ways to take care of yourself, be a strong parent and build healthy family relationships.

Think of the Protective Factors as layers of insulation between your family and the stress of the world. The more layers you have, the better the buffer for you and your kids. Each of the Protective Factors has been proven to support positive parenting—meaning happier kids and parents.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #1: NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

Nurturing and attachment means developing a pattern of positive interactions with your kids over time. Juggling the demands of work, home and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children. But even small acts of kindness, protection and caring—a hugs, a smile or loving words—make a big difference to children.

What nurturing and attachment look like:

- Recognizing that your child’s feelings and dignity matter
- Knowing that even when children are small, they have their own personalities, needs and ways of looking at things and need your understanding and respect
- Knowing what you have in common with each of your children and knowing how each of your children are different from you and from each other
- Listening ‘on purpose’ instead of only talking to your child or giving advice
- Lightening up and enjoying life and knowing what makes your child laugh



Tips for nurturing and attachment:

- Spend time with each child and as a family whenever you can. Find activities you enjoy doing together.
- Commit to responding, instead of just reacting, to challenges from your child. Exercising the self-discipline and self-control we want our children to have begins with our own behavior. It requires practice!
- Ask empowering questions of your child—questions that begin with Why? How? What? Then allow space for your child to find his/her own answers.
- Think about your best memories of family time and recreate those with your children or create new memories in time spent together.

Here are some different ways to bond with your child through different stages:

Bonding with babies (Birth to 12 months)

Even when your child is too young to understand you, talk to him. Make eye contact, smile and make exaggerated faces as you converse. He'll soon start to return the conversation with coos and happy shrieks. Hold your baby as often as you can. Rock her to sleep and cuddle during the daytime.

Toddler time (1-3 years)

Between 1 and 3 years, toddlers want your attention more than anything. Give it to them! Reward their good behaviors—playing quietly, sharing with a sibling, being gentle with a pet, eating their food—with praise and attention. This will give your toddler the attention they crave and strengthen the bond between you.

Your toddler will start moving farther and farther away from you as she explores her world. When she comes back, reward her with your attention and let her know that she's safe and that you're proud of her for exploring. Holding and snuggling are still great ways to bond at this age.

Preschool play (3-4 years)

Connect with your more independent 3 and 4-year olds by playing with them. Hide and seek, tag and backyard races are great for active games. For quieter moments, play pretend with dinosaurs and dolls, build a blanket fort or create something with blocks.

Your preschooler loves snuggling, leaning against you and hearing a story—sometimes the same one over and over!

Because you're such a great playmate, your preschooler will test the boundaries and make sure you're still in charge. When your child challenges you, and you hold firm to your boundaries, you reinforce the fact that he is safe and protected with you. It strengthens the bond!

School-age exploration (5-6 years)

Your child is starting kindergarten, getting involved in sports and activities, and becoming more involved in life outside your home at this age. She'll be discovering new things and wanting to tell you about them.

Encourage her to talk about what she's learning in school with very specific questions. Instead of "How was school?" ask "What did you work on at your math station?" or "Tell me about this art project that was in your bag?"

Giving your child a concrete question will elicit better answers.

Listen when your child is talking, and you'll learn about some of the things that really interest him. Aside from just helping with homework, enjoy time doing the things that interest your child. He'll know that you're important to him, and you'll get the joy of watching his face light up because he's doing something he really likes.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #2: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Being a parent is part natural and part learned. Having a good understanding of how kids develop makes it easier to react positively to challenges—like tantrums and defiance. Informed parents are more likely to have realistic expectations, provide appropriate guidance and build a positive relationship with their kids.

What knowledge of parenting and child development looks like:

- Knowing the basics of what to expect at each stage of your child's development
- Matching your expectations to fit your child's stage of development
- Creating a supportive environment for each stage of your child's development
- Managing child behavior through positive discipline techniques
- Recognizing and responding to your child's specific needs

Tips for knowledge of parenting and child development:

- Ask your family doctor, child care teacher, family or friends about parenting or stages of child development
- Recognize that parenting our children like we were parented may come naturally but may not be what we want to repeat
- Take time to sit and observe what your child can and cannot do
- Share what you have learned with anyone who cares for your child

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #3: PARENTAL RESILIENCE

Parental resilience means being both strong and flexible. It is being able to manage stress and function well when you're facing challenges big and small. Your ability to bounce back from stress plays a huge role in how you respond to your kids. When you're able to come back from stress quickly, you spend less time in the "danger zone" of feeling overwhelmed or panicky.

What parental resilience looks like:

- Resilience to general life stress
- Hope, optimism, self confidence
- Problem solving skills
- Self-care and willingness to ask for help
- Ability to manage negative emotions
- Not allowing stress to interfere with nurturing
- Positive attitude about parenting and child

Here are a few ways to keep your stress under control:

Time for you

You've heard this one before, but taking care of yourself will make you a better parent. This doesn't have to mean an expensive spa day – go for a walk, have a cup of coffee in a quiet room, get a babysitter so you can go grocery shopping by yourself. Build in times when you can be alone with your thoughts and not being a caregiver so your mind can recharge. You'll find that you're better at handling kid-related stress when you get some regular breaks.

Perspective

When it's past dinner time, but the food's not even in the oven and the homework isn't done and the living room is a mess, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Think of a perspective phrase for these moments, like "Blessed" or "Perfectly Imperfect." Call that phrase to mind when the little things are piling up. Close your eyes and think about the good in your life, and how these problems are not important.

Honesty

Some problems truly are small enough to shrug away. Some need to be dealt with. Financial, health and relationship problems can take a major toll on your own happiness and your ability to be the kind of parent you want to be. Deal honestly and directly with the real issues that are affecting your quality of life. Taking action to move in the right direction is usually less stressful than staying in an unhappy situation.



Make a plan

Sometimes the worst stress comes up when something unexpected does. Plan for what you can —have a schedule of how to get everyone out of the house in the morning. Pack lunches and backpacks the night before. Plan and shop for your weekly meals over the weekend—you can even make one or two meals ahead of time. Keep a big calendar in the kitchen of the family's activities and spend a moment each morning looking at what's coming up that day. Will you have to change dinner plans to squeeze in an appointment? Do you see conflicting activities that you need to change? Make those decisions quickly and leave the house with your plan for the day ready to go.

Breathe and relax

Though it might not be for everyone, yoga and mindfulness meditation have been a source of stress reduction for many people. Visit your local YMCA or yoga studio about a free class. Books on mindfulness meditation can be found at your local library.

Have fun!

The occasional girls/guys night out can do wonders for your stress level. But don't forget the most powerful source of fun in your life—your kids! Take some tips from them on how to let go of your troubles. Spin around until you get dizzy. Have a dance party in the living room. Play Simon Says and charades. Laughing with the people you love most is a sure way to stave off stress.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #4: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Social connections are positive relationships that provide emotional support and advice. Parents need friends. Having a network of social connections you can rely on is important for every family. This doesn't mean that you have to have hundreds of people in your life—just a few people at each level will provide you with people to lean on, learn from and laugh with.

Spend time with people who make you feel good and distance yourself from people who tear you down. Be careful to include people who you trust to tell you the truth, not just to feed your ego. People on your go-to team keep you positive by contributing to you growing stronger, healthier and more aware. They sometimes make you work to bring out the qualities that you value the most in yourself.

What social connections look like:

- Multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others
- Feeling respected and appreciated
- Accepting help from others and giving help to others
- Skills for establishing and maintaining connections

Tips for social connections:

- Participate in family and neighborhood activities like pot luck dinners, picnics or community get-togethers
- Join an activity at a local child care or family resource center
- Visit your child's school resource fairs or attend a parent group meeting

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #5: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

You can't do this alone—that's an undeniable truth of parenting. Concrete supports mean having access to goods and services that address your family's needs. Your community provides concrete support services so that when things get tough, you have somewhere to turn for help. And everyone needs help sometimes.

What concrete supports look like:

- Seeking and receiving support for food, shelter, clothing, health and other services when needed
- Knowing what services are available and how to access them
- Adequate financial security; basic needs being met
- Advocating effectively for self and child to receive necessary help

Tips for concrete supports:

- Make a list of people to call or places to contact for support
- Ask the director of your child's school to host a community resource night so you can see what your community offers
- Get to know and use the resources below

Resources:

Basic needs services

The churches and community centers in your area can direct you to specific services. Local food banks and distribution services like FoodNet can provide meals and may be able to provide a line on other services.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #6: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

The final Protective Factor is something that teachers call “social-emotional competence.” Basically, it means that children can manage their emotions, talk about their feelings and develop ways to solve problems in interactions with others. These skills are critical to success in school and overall happiness.

What social emotional competence in children looks like:

- Children feel loved, believe they matter, and can figure out how to act according to the expectations of different environments, for example, home and classroom.
- Children take turns and share.
- Children are able to talk to their parents about their feelings and parents help children express their feeling through language rather than “acting out.”
- When a child’s behavior causes extra stress and frustration to the child or the parent, the parent asks for help. This might include talking with an experienced teacher or counselor.

Tips for social emotional competence in children:

- Consider how your home feels from your child’s perspective. If needed, how can you make your home more peaceful?
- Set clear rules and limits, e.g., “people in our family don’t hurt each other.”
- Model empathy for others.
- Know what social and emotional skills children typically do and do not have at different ages.
- Visit the Zero to Three website, zerotothree.org, for tips and tools for infants and toddlers.
- Visit the Nebraska Family Helpline for information on child behavior problems or mental health needs. For crisis assistance on issues from bullying, drugs and thoughts of suicide to sharing and obedience issues, trained counselors are available 24/7 at 1-888-866-8660.

Here are some specific strategies:

Early learning

Make sure your child is receiving high-quality early childhood education as soon as possible. For stay-at-home parents, this can mean bringing in a trained home visitor to help provide new ways to help your child with social-emotional skills.

Social learning

Kids who have ample time around other kids have more opportunities to learn social cues and practice their own people skills, like sharing, taking turns and having conversations. If your child isn’t in school, church groups, tumbling classes or just regular trips to a crowded park are great ways to make sure your child is connecting with others. Set up one-on-one playdates so your child can deepen relationships.

Behavior management

Every child has challenging behaviors from time to time. Your school district and pediatrician can provide referrals to counseling services that are often free to help you correct problem behavior and keep your child on the right social-emotional path.



For Businesses

At first, the idea of businesses playing a role in raising healthy, stable kids seems counterintuitive. But when you consider that working adults spend the majority of their waking hours at their place of employment, it becomes clear that employers have a powerful impact on the quality of life of their employees. And employees with healthy, stable homes have fewer sick days and are more productive at work. As a business owner or manager, you have a lot of say in whether your practices positively influence the family lives of your employees.

You can build a culture, policies and practices that encourage the six Protective Factors with your employees' families.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #1: NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

Parents that are securely bonded to their kids are far more likely to have the positive interactions that lead to long-term stability and health of children. Business owners and managers like you can promote nurturing and attachment through:

Maternity leave – While companies with 50 or more employees are required to offer 12 weeks of unpaid leave to mothers after the birth of a child, smaller businesses may find this difficult. Work with your expecting employees to make sure they get enough time to bond with their babies, either with 8-12 weeks of maternity leave or with a shorter amount of leave followed by a part-time return period. For employees reluctant to take unpaid leave, consider offering inexpensive short-term disability insurance that will pay a percentage of the employee's salary while she's on leave.

Bonding leave – Dads need time to bond with their new children too. Many businesses give new fathers a paid week off to get to know a new baby in addition to any vacation or sick time. This is a great way for dads to get to know the newest member of their families.

Encourage vacation and sick leave – Having vacation and sick time is wonderful, but employees often don't use all of the time their employers provide them. By creating "use it or lose it" policies that allow employees to roll over only a week of their vacation/sick time, you're encouraging them to use these days off to care for sick family members, or better yet, connect as a family with a vacation.

Family events – Having an annual holiday party or family picnic can be a powerful way for employees to connect their home life with their work life. By providing family-friendly activities that your employees can do with their children, you're helping them build a deeper connection, while letting your employees know that they're important to you.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #2: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Parents that understand the ages and stages of infancy and childhood, and have a good grasp on strategies for dealing with the more challenging aspects of child development, make better parenting decisions. It sounds obvious, of course. And since working parents spend most of their time with their employer, businesses can help provide some of this knowledge.

Home visiting referrals – Many new parents find the services of a home visitor invaluable. A trained child development professional will visit the home, check on the child's development and share activities parents can do to help the child meet developmental milestones. This is powerful one-on-one learning that benefits both parent and child enormously. Provide new parents that work for you with the contact information for home visiting in your area, such as:

- The Early Development Network
- Sixpence Early Learning
- Early Head Start
- Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting



Mobile apps – *Staying on Track* is a free mobile app available through iTunes. It provides guidelines for children from birth through age 3.

Books as gifts – If you give gifts to your employees on birthdays, holidays or when a new child is born, consider giving a book about child development. *Mind in The Making* and *The Happiest Baby on the Block* are two good choices.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #3: PARENTAL RESILIENCE

One key component to a successful family that's bringing up strong, stable children is the ability of parents to bounce back from stress. As a business owner or manager, you know that the job can be a primary source of stress...and that's not going to change. One thing you can do is provide employees resources to deal effectively with stress.

Encourage regular breaks and renewals – Periodically recharging while on the job leads to greater productivity and innovation, plus allows employees to effectively deal with stress.

Reward healthy living – Regular exercise is a proven way to manage stress and promote resilience. Provide your employees an incentive to join and use a local gym. For example, any employee who logs 21 days of workouts in a month earns a day off. You can also work with local health clubs to negotiate a lower rate for your employees.

Personal development – Many companies will periodically bring in trainers to speak to employees about health and stress management.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #4: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

This Protective Factor is a win-win. For your business, employees are far more likely to stay with an employer if they feel like they have friends on the job. For your employees, parents who have solid friendships are much more likely to have positive, healthy interactions with their children.

Informal mentoring programs – These effective and free programs help new employees become acclimated with your business, while providing them with an instant connection. Mentors can help guide employees without involving management, and make employees feel like they belong.

Social events – The occasional social event can do wonders for relationship building. It brings people closer together and helps employees create those workplace friendships that mean so much for their on-the-job performance and their ability to bounce back from stress at home.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #5: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

Every family sometimes needs some extra help. And while it might not be the role of your business to provide the help they need, supervisors and human resource managers are in a good position to provide referrals and indirect access to concrete supports.

Have an EAP – An Employee Assistance Program is a very inexpensive benefit businesses can offer their employees, allowing them to get counseling for personal, family or work issues; substance abuse help and other supports for free.

Opt for insurance that covers mental health visits – If you offer health insurance to your employees, be sure to offer a policy that covers counseling and mental health prescriptions.

Keep a list – Physicians, child care, grief counseling groups, food pantries—sometimes when an employee has an emergency need, coworkers and supervisors are the first to notice. Being able to discreetly provide contact information for a service will benefit the employee, their family and you.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #6: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

The most effective way for businesses to support the development of their employees' children is to make it easy to access high-quality child care.

Dependent Care Flex Plan – Allow your employees to pay for child care tax free by instituting a flex plan. A certain portion of their wages is withheld and not taxed, and they can be reimbursed from the withheld money for what they spend on child care.

Consider a partnership – If there is a high-quality child care facility near your location, consider approaching them about reduced rates for your employees. The benefit to you is that having your employees' children at a nearby child care center also makes it easier for them to stay with you.



For Teachers/Service Providers

For most kids, teachers, para-educators and other caregivers are the center of their waking hours. While parents are at work, teachers like you have uninterrupted hours of influence on the children in your charge. And because of your regular contact with parents, you have a unique perspective into the dynamic of each family you touch.

You also have the power to maximize the Protective Factors in each of your families.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #1: NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

While you will see much more of students than you will of parents, teachers have opportunities to encourage positive interactions that foster healthy attachment between parents and children. And it's to your advantage too... children who are securely attached to their parents and have nurturing families behave better in the classroom and are ready to learn.

What we know:

Children's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with caring adults affects all aspects of behavior and development. Children that feel loved and supported by their parents and other adults tend to be more competent, happy and healthy as they grow into adulthood.

What you can do:

- Help parents build positive relationships with each of their children.
- Develop trust and working relationships with the parents you serve. Regular communication helps.
- Guide parent observations of their children's unique characteristics, strengths and development.
- Promote development of daily routines that provides infants or children with ample time for rest, nourishment and play.

- Link parents to evidence-informed programs to promote attachment such as Parents Interacting With Infants (PIWI) and Circle of Security™.
- Know symptoms of maternal depression and make appropriate referrals as needed.

Here are some specific strategies:

Parent nights

Periodic events where parents come to the classroom with their children can give you an opportunity to show new ways for families to interact. By teaching new games and modeling positive interactions, parents have the opportunity to expand their repertoire of behaviors with their kids.

Homework for parents

Send home periodic "worksheets" for parents to fill out that encourage interaction. For example, one worksheet could have the parent interview a child on his or her favorite hobby. The homework could be positioned as a way to help the child develop better conversation skills. Another example might be family art projects, or asking parent and child to develop their own recipe book.

Home visiting services

Many schools in Nebraska offer home visiting services for families with infants and toddlers—such as those in a partnership with the Sixpence Early Learning Fund or working with Early Head Start. Is there an organization in your community that you can partner with to offer weekly home visits to your families who've just had babies or have toddlers in the home? Evidence-based home visiting has proven to increase nurturing and attachment within the family.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #2: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

As a teacher, you have a formal education in child development, plus the day-to-day immersion in the world of children. It's easy to forget that parents don't always have the same training!

What we know:

Parents that understand child development stages and parenting strategies to support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development are more consistent with rules and expectations and communicate more effectively with their children.

What you can do:

- Provide information on developmental stages with examples
- Be responsive to issues presented by parents in the moment
- Offer information or coaching on specific parenting challenges
- Give parents opportunities to network with each other
- Promote early identification of children's developmental delays and recommend appropriate assistance

Here are some specific strategies:

Monthly development info

Share what you know about the age group you're teaching. Send home periodic letters about the developmental milestones, challenging behaviors that are common, interests that may come up and age appropriate activities. You can also include good information on family and parenting challenges like the Parenting Guides at boystown.org.

Host infant care classes

When one of your families has a new baby, invite them to periodic infant care classes at the school, where they can learn how to care for their new baby and get face-to-face education on child development.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #3: PARENTAL RESILIENCE

When parents and children can bounce back quickly from the stresses that life throws at them, they're far better positioned to respond effectively to the needs of their children, adapt to changes and manage challenges and crises.

What we know:

Many characteristics and abilities comprise resilience, such as a problem-solving skills, positive attitude and seeking help when needed. Resilience is the ability to handle both general life stresses and parenting stresses as well as to recover from occasional crises.

The word "resilience" will not be understood by all parents. Explore alternative ways of talking about these skills, for example, using an affirmation such as, "I have courage during stressful times or in a crisis." By partnering with parents, you can help them pinpoint factors that contribute to their stresses, as well as the successful coping strategies they use and their personal, family and community resources. (Making Meaningful Connections, 2015 Prevention Resource Guide)

What you can do:

- Provide information on causes of stress and how it affects health and relationships
- Help parents develop skills such as planning, goal-setting, problem-solving and self-care
- Make mental health support accessible and non-stigmatizing

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #4: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Having a strong network of close and even casual friends is a proven factor in positive parent-child interactions. Consistent informal support helps provide for the emotional needs of both parents and children. Holding periodic Parent Nights is a wonderful way to introduce parents to one another and get them comfortable with other adults in the school. Just by knowing someone, it's easier to reach out for help when it's needed.



What we know:

Parents that are connected to constructive, supportive family, friends and communities have better child and family outcomes. Everyone needs people in their lives that offer positive emotional support, positive parenting norms, resource sharing and mutual help.

Identifying and building on parents' current or potential social connections, skills, abilities and interests can be a great way to partner with them as they expand their social networks. For parents who have difficulty establishing and maintaining social connections, your discussion may help them identify what is holding them back. Encourage parents to express goals regarding social connections in their own terms, such as, "I have friends and know at least one person who supports my parenting." (Making Meaningful Connections, 2015 Prevention Resource Guide)

What you can do:

- Create spaces or opportunities for parents to socialize
- Help parents choose positive social connections

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #5: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

This Protective Factor means that parents have access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need. The school is the center of the community for families with children. And many schools capitalize on this by offering other services to families at the school itself. What are the concrete needs facing your families at risk and how can they be met at the school?

What we know:

Parents need basic resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation and access to essential services in order to ensure the health and well-being of their children. Many families do not get the resources and services for which they are eligible. Stigma can be one significant barrier.

Most parents are unlikely to use or identify with the words "concrete supports." Instead, they might express a goal such as, "My family can get help when we need it." Working with parents to identify their most critical basic needs and locate concrete supports keeps the focus on family-driven solutions. As a partner with the family, your role may simply be to make

referrals to the essential services, supports and resources parents say they need. Some parents might need additional support in identifying their own needs, addressing their feelings about asking for help, navigating eligibility requirements or filling out forms. (Making Meaningful Connections, 2015 Prevention Resource Guide)

What you can do:

- Use trusting relationships as the gateway to services and service networks
- Help families know what is available in the community as well as how to access local resources and services
- Promote service designs that support family integrity and build on family strengths
- Strengthen connections between service providers

Here are some specific strategies:

Afterschool/summer learning programs

Child care in the non-school hours is a critical need for working families. Having the kids safe and engaged in meaningful activities afterschool and during the summer means that parents will have the peace of mind they need to earn the income that will help the whole family get ahead. Your school may already have these programs in place. Are they serving all of the children who need them?

Food distribution

Making food available, via a backpack program or another discreet method, is a way to ensure that families who are food insecure have what they need. After all, it's difficult to maintain secure family bonds and positive interactions when the stress of chronic hunger is very real.

Central access to family services

The community's network of supports for families isn't always the most accessible. Often, even adults have a hard time navigating the system and they don't know who to go to. Since they're already familiar with your school, be a place parents can come and get access to other community services. Having easy and low-visibility access to the services they need can make a major difference in how families interact.



PROTECTIVE FACTOR #6: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

This is a Protective Factor that all teachers are familiar with. When social and emotional competence is present, children experience, regulate and express emotions to develop secure adult and peer relationships. Over the last few decades, teachers and administrators have added a range of social and emotional teaching methods to their toolkit as it became clear that without these critical skills, children couldn't succeed.

What we know:

Children who learn to communicate their emotions effectively and develop self-regulating behaviors interact more positively with adults and peers and are more likely to fare better in school and in life.

As a partner with parents, your role may simply be to explore how parents perceive their children's social and emotional development and how that is affecting the parent-child relationship. Not all parents will relate to the terms "social and emotional competence." They may choose to communicate its importance in terms of the desired outcomes: "My children feel loved, believe they matter and can get along with others." (*Making Meaningful Connections, 2015 Prevention Resource Guide*)

What you can do:

Assist adults and caregivers to:

- Have positive perceptions of each child
- Respond warmly and consistently to each child's needs
- Create an environment in which children feel safe to express their emotions
- Talk with children to promote vocabulary development
- Help children separate emotions from actions; model empathy
- Encourage and reinforce children's social skills such as taking turns

Here are some specific strategies:

The Pyramid Model

Across Nebraska, the Pyramid Model is being implemented in facilities that educate children from birth to age five. This is an evidence-based approach to promoting social and emotional competence in infants and young children. Learn more about the Pyramid Model at www.education.ne.gov/OEC/teaching_pyramid/index.html.



For Friends/Neighbors

Your circles of friends—from the close relationships you’ve had since childhood to the casual acquaintances you’ve developed with those who are in your circle by chance—is a powerful safety net for families. Adults look to other adults to know how to act in many situations, including how to behave with their children.

But parenting is a touchy subject. There’s this invisible line that friends don’t cross when it comes to telling other parents how to raise their kids. So don’t tell...show.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #1: NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

If you have children of your own, set an example with how you treat your children. Your friends will notice if you’re very close to your kids and that they’re securely attached to you, and can then use your behavior as a model when things get stressful.

Even if you don’t have kids of your own, holding, snuggling with and cooing to the newborn of exhausted new parents reminds them how precious their little bundle is. Asking older kids questions and getting to know them might give overworked parents ideas on how to talk to their kids.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #2: KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

If you’re looking for an awesome gift for a new parent, skip the receiving blankets and buy a couple of great child development books. Or, if your friend has a child that’s starting kindergarten, becoming a “tween”, beginning high school or experiencing some specific life event or milestone, there are excellent books for parents on how to better relate with their kids and keep their expectation realistic.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS #3 AND #4: PARENTAL RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Friends are imperative to both of these important protective factors. What makes someone resilient? Getting a break from the stress. And a network of friends—close and casual—are the best source for people to get a break.

Moms/Dads night out

This doesn’t have to be fancy, expensive or complicated. Just take the initiative to plan a time for your parent friends to meet up—for dinner, coffee, a softball game, a watch party of your favorite show—whatever. The important thing is that friends are connecting and that parents are getting a break from the rewarding, but very stressful job of raising children.

Check-ins

New parents, or families going through tough times don’t always need a lot. But they do need to know you’re there for them. Call, text or email just to “check in.” Find out if there’s anything your friend needs and let them know that you’re there if they need you. Even if they never take you up on it, the simple act of reaching out lets them know they’re not alone.

Parenting war stories

When you’re having parenting challenges, but it seems like everyone else’s family is perfect, you can feel lonely. Feeling like this causes shame to seek help if it’s needed. Friends can help by empathizing—letting a parent who’s having trouble know that you’ve been there too. It’s easier to deal with stress when you know that friends have made it through similar struggles.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR #5: CONCRETE SUPPORTS

While as a friend, you may not BE the concrete support that a family you know needs—like a doctor, help with housing, or emergency food—you can make referrals. If you see your friends and their families struggling and you know a service that can help them, SAY SOMETHING.





The Proof

Success stories from
across the state.

Protective Factors in Custer County Sixpence

Broken Bow's Sixpence program is a model example of a multi-organization partnership that works seamlessly, to the benefit of the babies, toddlers and young parents it serves.

Tucked away in an office near the cafeteria of North Park Elementary School, the Broken Bow Sixpence program works with around 25 families. Each week, parent educators conduct 90-minute home visits with each family on their caseload to teach parents about their child's development.

"It's very beneficial for the parents to understand that playing with Play-Doh is NOT just playing with Play-Doh," said Early Head Start Educator Brenda. "It's building the finger muscles and motor skills to later be able to write."

Learning the "whys" of different activities is just as important as the activities themselves, and it's one of the primary strengths of home visiting programs like this one. By understanding the changes their babies are going through, vulnerable or isolated parents are more likely to be patient, understanding and nurturing. Sure, parents learn what activities are best to help their babies learn new skills and explore their world. But they also get acquainted with the remarkable inner workings of their child's brain – and that increases the frequency and quality of engagements between parent and child.

Those who qualify for the program include teenage parents, those who qualify for free or reduced lunch, families where English isn't the primary language and families whose children are premature or of low birth

weight. And as parents learn how to be their child's best teacher, they also get the benefit of regular assessments and screenings so they know their babies are developmentally on track. Families also benefit from monthly "socializations." These get-togethers provide an opportunity for program participants to meet with other families and learn from one another, as well as their parent educators.

This program's regular socialization events act as two-hour Protective Factor generators. Not only are these children getting ready for kindergarten thanks to the outstanding educational team, but each family is learning to live the Protective Factors to keep them bonded, healthy and out of the child welfare system.



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

ACTIVITY

Nurturning and Attachment	Each parent-child interaction at the socialization was meant to increase nurturing and attachment.
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	The activities and educational elements at the event immediately increased knowledge of parenting and child development
Parental Resilience	Parental resilience is reinforced throughout each activity, as educators gently redirected negative behaviors and modeled positive ones without judgment
Social Connections	Social connections are core at socialization events, both for parents and children
Concrete Supports	Concrete supports for parents come in the form of resource sheets, supplies, referrals and the “just call me if you need anything” comments that can be heard from educators as they were talking parents through issues
Social-emotional Competence of Children	Social-emotional competence of children is an educational theme and backbone of many parent-child activities



PIWI in Fremont.

PIWI (Parents Interacting With Infants) is an evidence-based method to improve interactions between parents and their young children. It helps at-risk parents build the skills they need to work positively with their kids, and techniques for when things get tough.

In Fremont, the community collaborative supported by Nebraska Children and Families Foundation offers PIWI workshops to community parents who may be considered at risk.





The Resources

Find out more about Protective Factors and positive parenting.

The definitive resource on Protective Factors:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/?hasBeenRedirected=1>

Download the 2015 Prevention Resource Guide: Making Meaningful Connections:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/guide.pdf>

Protective Factor #1: Nurturing and Attachment

Circle of Security attachment tips - http://circleofsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/COS_attachmentforbaby.pdf

Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) - http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_piwi.html

Circle of Security - <http://circleofsecurity.net/>

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting -

http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/lifespanhealth_home_visitation_home-visiting-needs-assessment.aspx



Protective Factor #2: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Video on brain development - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmVWOe1ky8s>

PBS Parents - <http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/>

American Academy of Pediatrics - <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>

Help Me Grow - <http://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/index.htm?gclid=CKrvn5Sxi8QCFOYFaQodqUYAhQ>

Parenting 101 - <http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/parenting/>

Love & Logic - <http://www.loveandlogic.com/t-Free-Articles-and-Handouts-for-Parents.aspx>

Boystown Parenting Guides - <http://www.boystown.org/parenting/guides>

Time out and Time in cheat sheet - http://circleofsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/COS_Time-In.pdf

Zero to Three tip sheets - <http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/free-parent-brochures-and-guides/>

Protective Factor #5: Concrete Supports

ACCESSNebraska portal to DHHS services - http://dhhs.ne.gov/Children_Family_Services/AccessNebraska/Pages/accessnebraska_index.aspx

Heartland Family Services in Omaha - <http://heartlandfamilyservice.org/what-we-do/>

Lincoln-area services - http://centerforpeopleinneed.org/media/news/2014_Resource_Handbooks.pdf

Panhandle area services - <http://www.panhandlepartnership.com/members.html>

Nebraska Family Helpline - http://dhhs.ne.gov/behavioral_health/Pages/nebraskafamilyhelpline_index.aspx

Answers4Families - <http://www.answers4families.org/>

Nebraska Head Start - <http://www.neheadstart.org/>

Protective Factor #6: Social-Emotional Competence of Children

Nebraska's Early Development Network - <http://edn.ne.gov/cms/>

Sixpence Early Learning Programs - <http://www.singasongofsixpence.org/>

Pyramid Model for social-emotional development in the classroom -

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/states/ne_teaching_pyramid_brochure.pdf



About Nebraska Children.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation creates positive change for our state's kids through community engagement. We support children, young adults and families at risk with the overall goal of giving our state's most vulnerable kids what they need to reach their full potential. We do this by building strong communities that support families so their children can grow up to be thriving, productive adults.

Created with funds given to states through the Family Preservation and Support Act, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation was founded in 1997 as Nebraska's solution for strengthening families so children can reach their full potential in life.

We are a nonprofit organization that invests in, sparks and advances community solutions to create positive change for children. We bring public and private sectors together throughout the state to prevent problems that threaten the well-being of our children.

Working with local, state and national partners, we promote the importance of providing opportunities and services to families that nurture a child's healthy growth from cradle to career.

Find out more at NebraskaChildren.org.

